



*New Jersey Highlands Council
100 North Road – Route 513
Chester NJ 07930
www.njhighlandscouncil.org
P:908-879-6737 F:908-879-4205
Adam J. Zellner, Executive Director*

For Release: March 15, 2005
Contact: Liz Maziarz (908-879-6737)

Highlands Council Responds to Freeholders' Threat of Lawsuit

Chester, NJ- In response to the press conference held today by the lawyers and lobbyists hired by Hunterdon and Warren Counties, members of the New Jersey Highlands Council again stated that they stand ready and willing to meet, at any time, with representatives from the two counties to address their concerns. At the Highlands Council's first meeting and several times since then, Council members and staff have repeatedly offered to meet with freeholders.

"The Council is committed to discussing issues of concern and receiving suggestions from everyone," said Council Chairman John Weingart. "The Freeholders of Hunterdon and Warren Counties have so far chosen to hold press conferences and hire lawyers to threaten law suits, which is certainly their right. We hope that they will also take the time to work with us so that the plan the Council adopts can benefit from their knowledge of the region's past and present, and their views about its future."

To date, Council members have not received enough information to look at the specific issues of concern. However, the presentation by freeholders and attorneys for the two counties at the Highlands Council's initial meeting gave the impression that the Counties want the Council to overturn or significantly amend the Highlands Act.

"We at the Highlands Council do not want to waste precious time or taxpayer money to investigate something that is the Legislature's responsibility," said Council Member and Sussex County Freeholder Glen Vetrano. "As a Freeholder myself, I would exhaust every option for resolution of an issue through discussion before moving forward at expense to my constituents by hiring lawyers and lobbyists."

"The Council would like nothing more than an itemized list of issues from these two Counties. We could then review their concerns and move forward with a productive discussion," Chairman Weingart concluded.

##